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AUTHOR Lincoln, Yvonna S.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A case study was done of a large, private, research university's in-house effort to engage in assessment of the quality of faculty worklife, and to describe the variety of political, logistical, fiscal and data base management issues which arose from the largely faculty-directed and volunteer effort. Prompted by learning of efforts to create a national data base on quality of academic worklife, this institution undertook its own assessment. The case study of this effort developed from participant-observer collected data which included interviews, systematic notes, and minutes of meetings held by the Faculty Senate Task Force on Faculty Assessment. The assessment process itself began with the development of the Task Force, a series of "town meetings" in which faculty met to voice their opinions, and development and administration of a survey. Nearly 300 individuals participated in the meetings and 789 faculty, more than 50 percent, returned the survey. Lessons learned were characterized as a double-loop: faculty learned lessons and incorporated what they learned into new patterns of behavior and attitudes. Other lessons were political, logistical, fiscal, data-base related, and methodological. Throughout, the study results emphasized the inevitability of institutional politics as part of the process. Thirty references are included. (JB)

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INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED QUALITY OF WORKLIFE ASSESSMENT: THE POLITICS OF "DO IT YOURSELF"

Yvonna S. Lincoln
College of Education, Educational Administration Dept.
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-4226

Catherine Marshall
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Ann E. Austin
Michigan State University

HE 025 476

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INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED QUALITY OF WORKLIFE ASSESSMENT: THE POLITICS OF "DO IT YOURSELF"

Introduction and Problem

Higher education faces a projected diminution in the number of faculty available to replace retiring teaching and faculty, increasingly tight budgets, and a steady state with respect to growth in some sectors (e.g., Federal research funding). In concert, these factors lead to mounting concern with those non-fiscal elements which contribute to the quality of academic worklife. Since the quality of an individual's academic worklife is related to her or his desire to remain at a given institution, understanding what factors either contribute to, or detract from, satisfaction with worklife has assumed greater importance on campuses. Assessing how faculty construct or perceive their organizational life is now a central concern on a growing number campuses. But accomplishing such an assessment can create both opportunities and crises of its own.

While at least one major effort is underway to create a national data base on quality of academic worklife (see Astin, 1991), some institutions have undertaken their own situationally-directed assessments. This case study was the result of both: an institution agreed to participate in the national data collection effort of Astin and his associates at the University of California-Los Angeles, and as a result of that decision, the Faculty Senate at the institution decided to undertake its own assessment, attempting to identify issues and concerns which were not addressed by the national assessment questionnaire, but perceived to be unique to that campus.

Objectives

The purpose of this paper were, to present a case study of an institutional effort to engage in assessment of the quality of faculty worklife; to describe the variety of political, logistical, fiscal and data base management issues which arose from the largely faculty-directed and volunteer effort; and to suggest ways in which the particular challenges encountered in this effort might be informative for other institutions considering such studies.

The Possibility of Theory, and the Likelihood of Theoretical Frameworks

Academic worklife as a field of study is fairly recent. While many studies have looked at various facets of the professoriate (for instance, salary, relative distribution of tenure standing, retirement, average number of publications, and the like), research has only recently focussed on those non-quantifiable aspects of satisfaction with the quality of one's worklife. Nevertheless, with a projected scarcity of Ph.D.'s who indicate a desire to enter the professoriate, understanding what makes professors currently in teaching and research positions satisfied or pleased with their academic working environments is a critical issue.

The recency and paucity of research in the area of quality of life is academic prevent the development at the present time of major theoretical frameworks to guide inquiry. While some researchers might wish that theory were developed, or that theoretical frameworks existed which might be tested, in fact much more description is needed prior to launching such theory development. It is true, however, that good demographic (Astin, 1991; Carnegie Foundation are the Advancement of Teaching, 1982, 1989) and case study/interpretive/descriptive data are beginning to be available (see, for instance, Clark and Lewis, 1985; Austin and Gamson, 1983; Austin, Rice and Splete, 1991; Austin, Rice, Splete and Associates, 1991). Until sufficient

description exists on which meaningful grounded theory can be built, however, studies will continue to rely on a-theoretical, interpretive, and descriptive frameworks.

This study, rather, fits clearly in the frameworks provided by studies of organizational politics, the politics of evaluation, and research and evaluation utilization. We know, for example, that in organizational politics, those who frame the research and evaluation questions often are wary about how the research might be used by political opponents and that "research results can legitimate a challenge to policy and thus to the authority system that makes such policy" (Coleman, 1978, p. 199). We know that "evaluation can become a tool for wielding power and as such, is constantly an active variable in changing power relationships wihtin the political and organizational structure" (Banner, Doctors, and Gordon, 1975, p. xv). Further, enmeshed as they are in administration and policy questions, evaluations and instructional research efforts are undermind by shifts in power arrangements and priorities. Audiences and their proiorities change in midstream. Evaluators and researchers must consider the possibility "that they may be enmeshed illdefined sets of complicated and interrelated issues" (Kennedy, 1981, p6).

Putting to use the reseults of research and assessment is a much-studied issue. "Producing data is one thing. Getting it used is another" (House, 19 ; p. 133). Qualitative and quantitative data will be received and used differently.

Qualitative research findings are more accessible (story-like) but more vulnerable to attack than quantified findings. Qualitative methods are useful for understanding the "how" and "why" questions (LeCompte & Goetz, 1985). The data are thick and replete with subjective attributions of how, why, and who caused events. Such thick data are threateningly revealing in a politically charged organizational environment. Who controls collection, analysis and reporting of such qualitative data will be a key question.

In survey research, computers manage and report numbers; in qualitative research people manage personalized data to pull out patterns and themes. The latter approach, such as in an institutional case study, clearly identifies the interconnection between consequences and actor, behaviors, and processes. The latter approach will more likely identify useful recommendations

for change but may be politically charged. Further, policy makers are accustomed to short reports based on quantified data. Although their decision making is more often based on their personal assessments of a few constituents' cases, they think of research, evaluation, and assessment as quantified reports of survey results. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to focus on one institutional research question is a rare experiment, worthy of analysis.

Methods and the Sequence of Events in the Case

This case study grows from the authors' first-hand observation of, and participation in, a process to collect and analyze systematically faculty perspectives on the quality of their academic worklife at a large, private, research institution, an institution well supported in terms of both endowments and external funding efforts of faculty. The institution is an urban university with median family income for undergraduates around $60,000. Faculty number over 1,500 individuals tenured or in tenure-track or clinical ranks, and the institution includes among its professional schools a large medical school, an engineering school, a large business school, an old and respected divinity school, a school of music and performing arts, a school of nursing, and a school of education.

The authors of this case study served as both invited participant-observers and design consultants in and to the process of assessment. In the first role, they were faculty members and one a Faculty Senate member on the campus which undertook this indigenous and locally-designed effort at faculty assessment of the quality of their worklife; in the second role, they served as invited members of a Task Force which specifically requested their services and help in considering, designing and executing this assessment effort. In addition, each of the authors participated in different aspects of the process, often engaging in formal and informal unstructured or semi-structured interviews with key actors, including Faculty Senate Leadership who proposed the assessment of worklife process, administrators who acted as liaisons to the Senate as well as those who provided funding for the effort, Task Force members, and recognized methodologists on campus who were consulted for analytic advice and analysis expertise.

In the two years between conception of the idea by the Faculty Senate and the drafting of the preliminary quantitative and qualitative reports, systematic notes were kept by two of the three authors; minutes of the meetings of the Faculty Senate Task Force on Faculty Assessment were analyzed to track conceptual and political developments over time; and interviewing and re-interviewing of key participants and informants were conducted. In addition, all quantitative data were made available to the first author (the quantitative data base will be discussed shortly), and the first author performed the content analysis on all qualitative data collected in "town meetings". Thus, complete data bases are and were available to the authors. In addition, the narrative for the qualitative data was written by one of the authors, so a complete narrative informs this case study.

The Sequence of Events

Early in 1989, the university was invited to participate in Alexander Astin's national survey of faculty and institutions, and the administration agreed to participate, largely because participation in this study meant that aggregated data would be returned to the institution for its own uses in planning and projection. The administration's agreement, and the almost immediate appearance of the individual faculty questionnaires on faculty desks, prompted the Faculty Senate -- the faculty governance structure on campus -- to question why the administration had agreed to participation without consulting them. The Senate was also concerned about the uses to which the administration would put the returned data, and about the level of identification of individual faculty members. In recent history, faculty mistrust of top level administration had increased. But primarily, faculty leadership in the Senate and external to it felt strongly that, although participation in the Astin survey might be important, concerns unique to this campus would be overlooked or go unrecognized if the Astin data were the sole source of information about faculty perspectives and perceptions at this institution. One senior leadership figure analyzed the assessment issue by observing that

> It's [the survey] not what we need at this time and certainly it should not be used as a substitute for what we need . . . it sort of compares us to what the norm is, the norm being, I suppose, some sort of average. When you do that, that . . . is in essence a way to

The Faculty Senate moved immediately to commission its own study, understanding that such a study as they initially envisioned might take two years or more. The Senate leadership held the conviction that critical issues did exist on the campus. A senior faculty Senate Leadership figure, commenting on the rationale for the Senate effort, observed that

> The agenda was to discuss with the administration in an ongoing way what makes for a big university. . . . .One of the very early results that we got. . . .was that. . . .one element in a great university was to have ongoing communication and contact -- and a partnership -- between not only administration and the faculty, but also the Senate and the faculty.

Faculty Senate leaders were eager both to bring those issues into the forefront of a faculty-administration dialogue, and to work at creating a process whereby dialogue could become an accepted part of faculty governance and consultation. The Senate was the only formal body for faculty-administration dialogue and its powers were constrained. The reasons for commissioning such a study in the first place indicated unresolved and largely unaddressed issues on this campus, an agenda which itself become a major force in the quality of worklife assessment process. The Senate commissioned and appointed a Faculty Senate Task Force on Faculty Assessment, led by a young sociologist whose name became the Task Force's name: the Cornfield Commission. Members of the Task Force included current members of the Faculty Senate, and numbers of members who were not elected Senate officials, including one top level administrator.

The usual group processes associated with committees and commissions ensued, but this Task Force moved ahead more forcefully than most faculty committees. This was due to two factors. First, the chairman of this task force was excellent at organizing, summarizing and clarifying discussion and at directing committee work toward the next step. And second, the chairman himself was personally and professionally dedicated to modeling a process of democratic, open, frank governance on this campus, governance that would be characterized by cordial, forthcoming and honest communications between faculty and administration. Between the chairman's group and communication skills, and his commitment to egalitarian faculty roles, the

task force achieved a sense of purpose and direction, and a strong sense of next steps, early and relatively easily. This occurred in spite of the task force's composition representing many different organizational, political, analytic and methodological persuasions. "In spite of" might not even be the best term for what happened, since the several persuasions represented saw no conflict on the issues of how data might be gathered or presented; their main concern was the issue of what data might be most persuasive to the administration in displaying faculty concerns.

The Task Force early on decided to undertake a two-step process for identifying, then weighing, faculty concerns and issues. In shortened form, the process looked like this: faculty members would be invited to participate in "town meetings", structured similarly to New England town meetings. Those meetings were to be scheduled within the faculty's work groups; for example, the business school would meet with only other business school faculty. The hard sciences within the College of Arts and Sciences would meet with themselves, while the social sciences--from the same college--would meet only with social scientists. Small professional schools would have each have their own meetings and large units, such as the College of Arts and Sciences, would meet in disciplinary subgroups. Each unit would schedule several meetings, so that faculty who wished to speak, but who could not meet at one time, would nevertheless have a chance to attend another meeting.

Convenors for the meetings were two kinds of individuals: campus opinion leaders whose integrity and articulateness were widely respected, and/or Faculty Senate representatives for the unit (who largely fell into the first group, in any event). Each convenor would choose a "recorder", whose purpose it was to record the discussions, omitting names, as a kind of extended focus group interview.

The meetings were widely advertised throughout the campus, and individual faculty sent notices of the meetings scheduled for his or her workgroup. Faculty were further given to understand, both orally and in the announcements, that no names would ever be associated with statements made. In most instances, nearly verbatim transcripts were produced. The various transcripts formed the body of the qualitative data base.

When the qualitative data base was subjected to a formal content analysis, the content analyst then worked with a social scientist (whose specialty was survey research) to "translate" the results of that analysis into a survey instrument which could then be distributed to all faculty members on this campus. Nearly 300 individuals participated in the "town meetings" which gathered the initial qualitative data; 789 faculty (more than half) returned the survey questionnaire sent six months later.

The original plan was to have a single report created, combining the qualitative and quantitative data bases. But because the qualitative analyst left the campus, two reports were generated: the first, solely from the qualitative data base, the second, a much shorter one, from the quantitative data base. Not unremarkably, the quantitative survey instrument results strongly supported the qualitative analysis. But the strengths of the quantitative data base were that it enabled graphic representation of faculty concerns (using QUATTROPRO integrated with WordPerfect text formats), and it was presented in a much shortened format, which the administration preferred.

The study process itself was, to say the least, fascinating. Because the campus atmosphere was one of general mistrust, the process had many chances to be derailed. But since faculty were willing to try honest communication with central administration one more time, many individuals continued to work with the Task Force, and to put time and energy into the qualitative and quantitative analyses long after another riven campus might have abandoned it. The process of development and implementation of this indigenously-designed and implemented study provided many lessons for other campuses who might wish to undertake a similar effort.

Lessons Learned

The learning on this campus which proceeded from this effort was probably, especially for those involved, double-loop -- certainly in the sense that faculty learned lessons, then incorporated what they learned into new patterns of behavior and new attitudes. It remains to be seen whether the context will also change, since there is a history and a tradition of lack of communication, a

distant and aloof Board of Trust, an administration which makes decisions without extensive consultation, and a lingering paternalism felt by the faculty from the central decisionmakers. But the process itself--largely due to the Task Force Chairman's efforts--preserved its integrity and its confidentiality. This required almost endless defense, but in the end, faculty felt the force of an authentic democratic governance process. While trait theories of leadership are now largely discredited (Birnbaum, Bensimon, and Neumann, 1989), nevertheless much is owed in this process to the strong will, protective stances, and unwillingness to compromise or sell out of the Task Force chair. He was unremitting in his efforts to guard the data (which, on the survey form, could be tracked back to single individuals by virtue of demographic variables), and to prevent faculty members from being identified by the administration. Strategic Leadership for managing the political tensions in such assessments is essential (Marshall, 1984). Thus, the first lessons were political.

Political lessons

The process reminds the writers of Lewis Carroll's dedication of Alice in Wonderland, which is widely reputed to have been: "To my daughter Elizabeth, without whom this book would have been done three years earlier." Members of the Task Force might well feel that way about the administration, and most assuredly, with the wholehearted help and support of the administration, such a process could be completed much more smoothly.

The Faculty Senate has access to virtually no funds of its own, so requested a minimal amount of research funds to undertake this study -- from the administration. At that point, of course, the administration became extremely interested in the process, in what kinds of data might be available, and in whether or not it would have access to individual surveys (the answer was an unqualified "no"). Several months passed before the administration agreed to provide funds (about $3,500.) to the effort, and finally did only because campus opinion leaders, and well-respected faculty representatives, including the Task Force chair, helped the administration to understand that it was

in everyone's best interests to have such data, and that without those data, the campus climate could never hope to improve.

Nevertheless, at times, tensions ran high. This might not have been the case had the administration felt from the start that it was a worthwhile effort, and that faculty should be supported in this effort in the interests of both campus communication and faculty professional development. It is a measure of the faculty's unwillingness to trust the administration that one professional school, for instance, conducted their "town meeting" by campus Internet hookup, so that no single correspondent could be identified. As one interviewee put it, "the administration thinks the faculty will riot, and the faculty are paranoid about the administration; in fact, there's a lot of paranoia on this campus".

The first lesson of politics was that faculty who undertake such a self-assessment should understand just how difficult such an effort will be if the administration is nervous about the data ahead of time. One Senate leader mused:

> Our administration says it's interested in the truth, but sometimes I wonder if it is interested in the truth. . . .if you really got in touch with the pulse of the faculty, that might put the administration on the spot about various and sundry things.

And on the same issue - the receptivity of central administration to both the process and the data it might generate - the Task Force Chair expressed hopes that

> . . . the Task Force appeared not to be too militant . . . .so as not to scare off the administration. That was based on the assumption that most administrations at universities, especially one that seems to operate from the corporate model, would be uptight about further decentralizing the decision or the process.

Yet another faculty member described the deterioration of relations between administration and faculty as creating "a hotbed of cold alienation", and this was borne out by Faculty Senate leaders who noted prior to this process that "[the Faculty Senate would] have to spend inordinate amounts of time framing our recommendations to make them palatable to the Chancellor." The inverse to

lesson number one, of course, is also true: if communications are good, and exchanges between faculty and administration forthright and frank, then probably the need for such a quality of worklife self-assessment (while always useful) is not as critical in the first place. (Nevertheless, institutional self-assessment may prove useful even if faculty-administration relationships are cordial and productive, since unrecognized issues or problems may be uncovered by such a process.)

Another political issue was the recognition that study of faculty perceptions is understood and comprehended differentially among and between different faculty groups and constituencies on campus. Some faculty comprehended this effort as a way of trying to increase faculty participation in decisionmaking and consultation, while others immediately evaluated the effort as a "managerial tool", which would be used if the results and findings proved useful to the administration, and shelved if the findings did not. Strong concern was voiced about access to data, and when those concerns were addressed, some constituencies still voiced concern that administration would feel powerful enough to ignore even compelling data. On the latter point, clearly only time would tell, and it is still, at the time of this writing, not clear what long-term effect the data will have. The lesson is that those who plan studies of faculty views must find ways to convey what the purposes of the project are and how the data will be analyzed, with whom and in what form it will be shared, and to what uses it will be put.

A third political issue was credibility, for both the Task Force members and for the data to be generated. In the appointments of committee members to the Task Force, care was taken to choose faculty members who enjoyed widespread respect, or who possessed expertise in some arena, or who combined both factors. Discussion of strategies to enhance the credibility of the data appears later in the paper.

Logistical and Fiscal Issues

As alluded to earlier, the Faculty Senate had no operating budget of its own to pursue even small research projects relating to campus life. The upshot of this fiscal dilemma was the necessity to request funds from the central administration for conducting the study. A large part of the agreement which made the funds available was that much of the study would be done with volunteer help, and miraculously, that occurred. The two methodologists who cooperated in both analyzing the qualitative data and in translating those data into a sound survey instrument gave whatever time it took for the project, despite the fact that both had full research agendas of their own, and the survey methodologist was moreover chairing a somewhat large department in the social sciences.

Logistically, collecting survey data turned out to be a problem. Since the data were agreed to "belong" to the Faculty Senate, the administration suggested the questionnaires returned should be returned to the Faculty Senate office -- down the hall from the Provost's office. However, given the Task Force's commitment of protecting the anonymity of individual respondents, it was agreed that data should be returned to the survey research methodologist's office, where they were coded and SPSS-processed by a research assistant redeployed for this effort. This ensured that data were not out of the hands of the Task Force or its assigned representatives.

In the final analysis, major costs of the study were printing, mailing and research assistantship help (both the qualitative analyst and the quantitative analyst were allocated money for assistantship help). All other work was done out of individual "hides" -- on the side, on weekends, between other administrative and teaching assignments.

Another logistical problem which was anticipated, but did not arise (but well could on another campus) was a claim on the study or its data from the university's institutional research unit. Many IR offices would be prepared to handle the logistics of such a study (printing, mailing, collecting completed survey forms, data scanning them, providing preliminary printouts of raw data). On another campus, an office of institutional research might be the very unit to undertake such a study, at the behest of central administration, but with wide faculty consultation and advice. In this instance, however, the IR office was conspicuously absent from the process, and indeed, at one

point, sent word that it was not interested. Members of the Task Force as well as the authors of this paper found it surprising that the institution's IR office was indifferent to this effort to collect campus-wide data on faculty perceptions. The IR office potentially could have used the data generated, especially those data on budgetary and benefit items where faculty expressed some dissatisfaction. Additionally, the IR unit might have had other relevant data which it could have merged with the Senate data base, and it also might have contributed to a final report by projecting and forecasting what would be the costs to the institution of the recommendations emerging from the study. Perhaps the lack of interest and involvement on the part of the institution's IR office can be explained by its position in a private university, where its role may be far less extensive (and perhaps more oriented to internal administrative requests) than an IR office in a public institution that must prepare data in response to legislative needs.

At an institution where an IR unit is interested in a study such as the one discussed here, a critical issue in the study design process would be deciding on the role such an office would play. While an IR office may be situated to provide extensive help with survey and interview design, its involvement may represent a problem at institutions where it is perceived by faculty as an arm of the central administration. In such cases, concerns about protection of anonymity and the use to which data on faculty perceptions of the academic workplace will be put may be especially prevalent and may pose a barrier to the willingness of faculty to participate.

Data Base Credibility Lessons

The first and always main concern regarding the data, after confidentiality, was credibility: what kind of data would prove most credible to both central administration, and to the faculty themselves? The answer to that question was twofold. Within the Task Force itself, and despite the fact that its membership represented many methodological persuasions, individuals were convinced that whatever form the data took, it should be grounded; that is, data ought to grow from the faculty-nominated perspectives on their own lives. Therefore, qualitative data were deemed a necessary part of any assessment efforts.

On the other hand, Task Force members were sensitive to the kinds of data which were often deemed most persuasive by central administration, and those were believed to be quantitative. As a result, the two-step process described earlier was devised. Data would be gathered qualitatively, then translated after a careful content analysis into a "grounded" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) survey instrument which could capture trends from the entire faculty body. For this reason, extraordinary efforts were made to ensure that the qualitative data base was both broad (in the sense of inviting the widest possible participation by faculty), and deep, or "thick" (in terms of having the richest and widest number of issues emerge and be discussed).

With respect to the data, any effort to gather faculty views will fail if it is not believed to capture the perspectives of all the faculty. This means accurate, appropriate and sufficient representation. To cast the net as widely a possible, the previously-mentioned "town meeting" or focus group format, was adopted, and based in the professional schools and department- related groupings.

Such a focus group process relies heavily on the skills of discussion facilitators and recorders. Facilitators who cannot listen carefully, recognize and pursue critical points, open and close avenues of discussion, and render their audiences capable of honest sentiments in a nonthreathening atmosphere were not going to be helpful to the process. Likewise, a recorder who could not take good notes, and capture the essence of various discussions, would undermine substantially the process, because the transcripts of these town meetings were to be the basis for the qualitative data analysis.

For these reasons, the Faculty Senate and the Task Force chairman identified and requested the services of faculty members who were reputed to have good group discussion skills and who were able listeners. As we observed earlier in this process

> By basing original data collection efforts in the "local" and natural faculty groupings, it was hoped that the effort would collect not only individual faculty member's constructions of their lives, but also constructions which were shared between and among the professional groupings (Marshall, Lincoln and Austin, 1991).

thus, there was concern to collect not only individual, but also disciplinary, perspectives, perceptions, and constructions.

Both qualitative and quantitative data have overtones and political implications of their own. Despite increasing usage of qualitative data in higher education (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988; Tierney, 1988; Lincoln, 1989; Austin, Rice, Splete, and Associates, 1991), higher education is a field characterized by historical usage of large data bases and quantitative measures (see, for instance, Cross, 1974; Pace, 1979; Astin and Associates, 1991; and others). Nevertheless, the compensating strengths of qualitative methods for the weaknesses in quantitative measures (Marshall, 1984) have not brought about their widespread adoption in institutional assessments of either faculty or student life simply because they are expensive to gather in most instances, require special expertise to analyze (and that expertise has not often been available), and because such data represent cumbersome data bases to those unfamiliar with working with such forms. In this case study, qualitative data represented no difficulty for the assessment effort, because technical assistance resided on the faculty. For other institutions, such voluntary technical help might indeed not be available, and the lack thereof might prevent other institutions interested in the assessment effort to forgo the opportunity to create a grounded survey of quality of worklife perspectives from faculty. Expense, perceived cumbersomeness, and resident technical experience and expertise might all contribute to having certain kinds of data, particularly qualitative data, appear to be not worth the time and trouble, despite demonstrated credibility.

Methodological Lessons: Merging Qualitative and Quantitative Data Bases

A final issue is more methodological than philosophical, but it too has political overtones and implications. That concerns the possibility and desirability of combining qualitative and quantitative data bases. Much has been written regarding the supposed advantages of combining qualitative and quantitative data (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Cook and Reichardt, 1979; Greene and Cascarelli, 1990; and others). There is, from a philosophical standpoint, nothing wrong with such an effort, especially when data collection efforts are organized is such a way as to be

philosophically congruent (i.e., collected utilizing the same set of assumptions), and when questions regarding the primacy of data bases have been answered. In some instances, quantitative data can be collected which informs the qualitative interviews and data collection which comes later (Marshall, 1984); in other instances, qualitative data collection efforts can feed deliberately into grounded quantitative efforts (that is, when fundamental issues and concerns from the stakeholding audiences have been utilized to create the instruments which will be used to collect quantitative data). In this particular case, the latter occurred, and in the drafting of reports, the qualitative data base clearly enjoyed primacy, with quantitative data supporting the conclusions drawn by qualitative data analysis.

But the primacy question was settled long before data collection began. One might imagine a situation where such primacy was not assured, and where, additionally, there might be conflicting data between the two data bases, especially if the survey data base were "underground", that is, constructed without reference to adequate descriptive data. That could prompt political wrangles on some campuses regarding which data were the more "accurate", or which the more "weighty". Fortunately, that did not obtain in this case study, but its potential for conflict should not be overlooked in indigenous efforts at assessment of faculty views (or any other kind of quality-of-life assessment, for instance, for students). Discussions which precede data collection, which confront and settle such issues prior to analysis and writeups, and which have agreements and discussions in writing forestall the formation of factions which support contending data bases.

Lessons on the Politics of Managing Assessment

By analyzing the events and issues surrounding assessment we may be able to identify critical elements in those that are managed, reported, and received well. Marshall's (1984) analysis of such an evaluation in a politically charged environment, using qualitative methods, found these to be critical elements: agreement on a focused question; appropriate flexibility, personnel and resources; access to formal and informal policy making to help in keeping policy actors attuned to emerging findings; and politically astute reporting and dissemination. The assessment of faculty work life described above expands on and modifies this list. In this article we have seen that, to

gain the political leadership support, the resources, the data, and the relevant audience, and to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, required careful political, fiscal, logistical and methodological management.

Assertive leadership by the assessment director insured that confidentiality of data could be preserved. The faculty members' methodological expertise (qualitative and quantitative) insured that well articulated rationals and procedures would cut off any criticisms. The low to non-existent funding was offset by faculty members' high professional motivation to 1) be involved in a methodological experiment and 2) provide deep insight into their own work lives. That no other group (e.g. the I.R. unit) challenged the assessment eased the way for the project. The resistance to and the expense of qualitative assessment was offset by faculty volunteered expertise. The balancing of the use of qualitative and quantitative data was settled without controversy. The lessons of the assessment described in this project are transferable in so far as these elements will obtain in another setting.

Afterword

Our experience has been that faculty quality-of-worklife assessments can be carried out successfully even on campuses where mutual trust and regard are not universally high. And despite warning literature which argues that campuses are more homogeneous now than ever in the past, we strongly believe that each campus actually represents a unique history and set of circumstances which make its context sufficiently dissimilar to warrant locally-inspired,-constructed, and -applied quality of worklife appraisals. Policies derived from such evaluations must be tailored to the individual and site-specific circumstance in which they will be applied, and so are often better suited than policies which are derived from more national demographic descriptions.

The politics, however, of engaging in such a process demand that issues be thoroughly aired, and that lines and chains of authority and responsibility be clear prior from the beginning. No single method, including the one described in this case, may be best for all institutions, although

the authors have strong persuasions about the usefulness of capturing faculty constructions in their own terms and language, and then grounding a survey instrument in that local and indigenous concerns, interests, issues and discourse. But whatever the methods chosen to address such issues, politics will be an inescapable part of the process, and indeed, will be the heart of such an effort. The issue will be to see that those politics are the politics of open governance, mutual respect, and democratic process.

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